

Breathe Easier

BULLETIN

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CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Rosario Marin, Secretary, State and Consumer Services Agency

I am pleased to introduce this first edition of the Breathe Easier Bulletin, a newsletter for our public awareness

campaign to help educate Californians about the negative effects of air pollution, and the many ways we can all contribute to help clean California's air.

Since my recent appointment to lead the State and Consumer Services Agency, I have had the opportunity to learn more about this program. I would like to share with you a few of the questions that I have asked while getting

to know the campaign and the answers that I have received.

What is the Help California Breathe Easier public awareness campaign?

Governor Schwarzenegger launched the *Breathe Easier* public awareness campaign in March 2005 to call on Californians to help reduce vehicle-related pollution. The campaign educates Californians about the negative health effects of pollution. The State and Consumer Services Agency, in partnership with the CalEPA, the Department of Motor Vehicles and the Health and Human Services Agency, is

promoting ways for Californians to take action to help clean California's dirty air.

Why is the Help California Breathe Easier campaign important?

This administration places a high priority on making California's air cleaner and safer to breathe. Clean air is essential to the health and quality of life of all California residents. Studies show that air pollution contributes to significant health problems, especially chronic lung diseases like asthma. According to a UCLA study, one in six California children suffers asthma symptoms annually.

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THE LINK BETWEEN CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND AIR POLLUTION

Bonnie Nadzam, Southern California Environmental Health Sciences Center, USC

An important research study conducted in southern California has generated evidence that the lungs of children growing up in more-polluted communities develop more slowly than expected and that these deficits probably have long-term health consequences. "Low lung function has been shown to be second only to smoking as a risk factor for all-cause mortality [death]," says W. James Gauderman, associate professor of Preventive Medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California (USC).

Beginning in 1993, USC investigators began enrolling 6000 children from 12 communities to determine whether long-term exposure to outdoor air pollution affects respiratory health. The research effort became known

as the "Children's Health Study" (CHS). Initial questionnaires assessed each child's demographic characteristics, medical history, physical activities, tobacco smoke exposure, and housing characteristics. Annual questionnaires assessed the children's activity patterns and their respiratory symptoms. And each child's lung function was measured annually.

USC investigators also measured outdoor air concentrations of ozone, particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10), nitrogen dioxide and acid vapors at monitoring stations in each of the 12 communities; measured air quality at children's homes; calculated distance of each home from local freeways; and estimated traffic-related pollutants at each home.

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THE EVIDENCE IS CLEAR...FIXING OR SCRAPPING HIGH-POLLUTING VEHICLES HELPS ALL CALIFORNIANS

Charlene Zettel, Director, Department of Consumer Affairs

The news is not good for California's air quality. The American Lung Association recently released its 2005 State of the Air Report with five California cities ranking in the top ten worst polluted cities in the nation, including the top three spots.

Recent studies have linked air pollution to a wide variety of negative health effects, including asthma, reduced lung capacity, heart disease, cancer and even premature death. California has some of the highest prevalence of asthma in the nation. According to 2001 California Health Interview Survey, an estimated 11.9% of Californians—3.9 million children and adults—have been diagnosed with asthma at some point in their lives.

According to the California Air Resources Board, California vehicles produce more than 2,000 tons of pollution every single day. This,

in itself, takes a heavy toll on California's air quality.

On average, older vehicles (20-25 years old) that fail Smog Check can produce up to 30 times more emissions than newer vehicles. These high-polluting cars make up only about ten percent of all the vehicles on the road, but they emit more than 50 percent of the vehicle pollution. If we take these vehicles off the road or fix them so they run cleaner, we will reduce pollution and make our air healthier. It's really that simple.

The Bureau of Automotive Repair has targeted these high-polluting vehicles through its Consumer Assistance Program (CAP). The CAP will pay motorists \$1,000 to voluntarily retire their high-polluting vehicle and have it crushed or up to \$500 toward smog-related repairs for qualified consumers.

The program's goal is to permanently remove 15,000 high-polluting vehicles from California roadways by July 1, 2006. This would represent a reduction of more than 900 tons of smog-forming pollutants.

In 2005, Governor Schwarzenegger launched the *Help California Breathe Easier* public awareness campaign to promote the Consumer Assistance Program and educate motorists about the harmful health effects of vehicle-related smog.

You can help clean up California's air by repairing or retiring your polluting vehicle or by helping spread the word about the Consumer Assistance Program. For more information or to obtain an application, visit the Breathe Easier Web site at www.BreatheEasier.ca.gov or call (800) 952-5210.

SCHWARZENEGGER ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS PROMOTE CLEAN AIR AT THE ENERGY AND CLEAN AIR BUSINESS EXPOSITION IN BAKERSFIELD



A high-polluting vehicle is sent to the crusher.



Department of Consumer Affairs Director Charlene Zettel discusses the health and economic benefits of clean air before crushing a high-polluting car.



California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary A.G. Kawamura and DCA Director Charlene Zettel watch with Expo onlookers as the crusher permanently rids California roadways of a gross-polluting vehicle.



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What can Californians do to help clean California's air?

Californians can help by repairing or retiring their gross-polluting vehicles and keeping their vehicles well maintained so that emissions are kept at the lowest possible levels. The Bureau of Automotive Repair's Consumer Assistance Program pays for up to \$500 in smog-related repairs for qualified vehicles or gives motorists \$1000 to permanently retire gross-polluting vehicles by having them crushed.

How does the *Help California Breathe Easier* campaign promote its clean air message?

The *Help California Breathe Easier* campaign includes a public outreach effort to remind people that there are serious consequences to smog by participating in events like the California State Fair and Earth Day and through posters, postcards, brochures and some paid advertising. Campaign information is also available online at www.BreatheEasier.ca.gov.

Who pays for this campaign?

The funding for this program comes from a portion of the annual \$12 fee paid by owners of new model year vehicles, now exempt from Smog Check for six years. Health and Safety

Code section 44070.5 mandates that the Department of Consumer Affairs continually educate the public about the health damage caused by air pollution and the contribution of automobiles to air pollution.

Cleaning California's air is essential because the quality of the air we breathe impacts every aspect of our daily lives. I look forward to continuing to work with the *Help California Breathe Easier* campaign and its partners to help create a cleaner California, now and in the future.

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The ongoing CHS has collected evidence that:

1. Lung function growth for children in communities with higher NO₂ levels and other traffic-related pollutants (including nitric acid vapor, particulate matter, and elemental carbon) is approximately 10% slower than children in communities with lower levels of these pollutants.
2. Daily changes in ozone levels increased school absence rates. (Absences can create an added economic burden for caregivers and school districts which lose per-pupil funding and they may interfere with a child's education).
3. Lung function growth rates improved among children who moved away from more polluted communities and relocated in areas with lower particulate matter concentrations.
4. Children who played several team sports in communities with high-ozone levels had a higher incidence of new-onset asthma.

5. Children who live closer to freeways (and traffic pollution) are more likely to have asthma.

Considering the enormous costs associated with childhood asthma, today's public policy toward regulating pollutants may merit some re-evaluation," says Gauderman about the traffic and asthma study. Other long-term effects will be evaluated as USC investigators follow study participants into their early 20s.

The CHS is one of the most comprehensive studies examining long-term consequences of air pollution on children's respiratory health. The CHS and other research studies contribute to the growing body of evidence that air pollution, at levels permitted by current state and federal standards, is harming children's health. These studies reveal that even with the most aggressive efforts to reduce emissions, the current generation of children in California will suffer adverse health effects from air pollution.

**For more information, go to
www.usc.edu/medicine/scehsc.**

Fast Facts

The Bureau of Automotive Repair's Consumer Assistance Program (CAP) pays qualified vehicle owners \$1000 to turn in their high-polluting vehicles or up to \$500 toward fixing them to pass Smog Check.

The CAP's goal is to permanently remove 15,000 high-polluting vehicles from California roadways by July 1, 2006 and continue the retirement of 15,000 vehicles annually over the next ten years. By 2015, the effort would result in the cumulative elimination of more than 9,000 tons of smog-forming vehicle emissions.



Governor Schwarzenegger launched the *Help California Breathe Easier* public awareness campaign in March of 2005 to help educate Californians about the negative health effects of vehicle pollution, and to promote ways we can help clean California's air. The public awareness campaign is led by the State and Consumer Services Agency, in partnership with the California Health and Human Services Agency, California Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Motor Vehicles. The campaign also promotes the Bureau of Automotive Repair's Consumer Assistance Program, which pays qualified motorists \$1000 to permanently retire their high polluting vehicles, or up to \$500 in smog-related repairs to pass the smog check.

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 22, 2006

2006 Sacramento Earth Day Celebration
CSUS Campus, Sacramento

Information booth

www.earthdaysac.org

August 11 - September 4, 2006

California State Fair
Cal Expo Fairgrounds, Sacramento

*Information booth,
Nightly Car Crushing Event*

www.bigfun.org



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